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DAYBREAK

ELIZABETH W. F. JACKSON

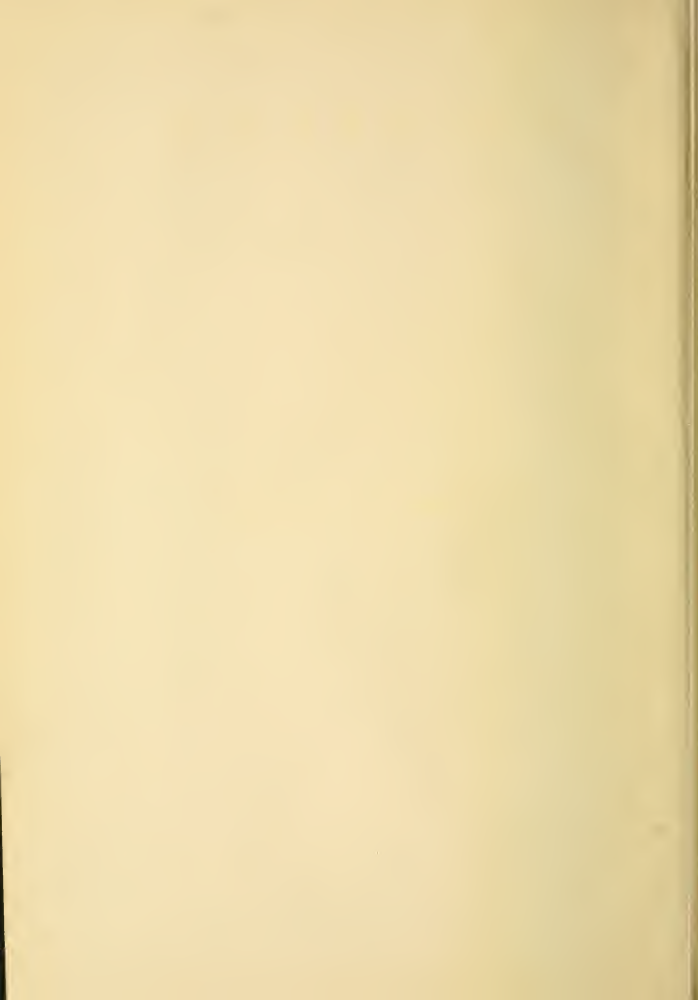


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DAYBREAK

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ELIZABETH W. F. JACKSON

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There are moments rare, when upon the soul, traveling Godward, the light of Truth shines brightly, driving away the lingering doubts and fears; like the light of the new day, driving away the lurking shadows of night.

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THE TEMPLE OF UNDERSTANDING.

Far out over the shining waves, upon a small island, was a building of purest white. From this building, as from a lighthouse, shone a bright yellow light, making a golden path, as it were, across the water to the shore.

Boats were traveling back and forth over this shining track. There were two persons in each boat: one who seemed to be the boatman—though the boats appeared to travel of themselves, with no propelling power;—the other passenger seemed to be a pilgrim of some sort.

Time after time the boats traversed the space between island and shore, taking the pilgrims back and forth. At last a boat stopped in front of where I stood, and the boatman held out his hand to help me on board. In joyful surprise I stepped into the boat.

As we approached the island, I noticed the wide steps, marble, like the building

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itself, but the bright yellow light which the whole building radiated fell upon them, making them look like stairs of gold.

There was such a kind, benevolent look upon the boatman's face as he led me to the foot of the steps. "You cannot enter until you understand," he said.

"But I do not understand," I replied.

"Not now, perhaps; but you are willing to learn; otherwise I should not have brought you here." He turned, and seated himself in the boat.

A light, brighter than before, fell upon me. I looked up. In the doorway stood a radiant being—man, yet not man—god, yet not god. I felt so drawn to him, I could have thrown myself prostrate at his feet, and clasped the hem of his garment. Yet I was abashed before him.

He gazed steadily at me a full moment, then he said, "Now you understand; enter."

"Yes, I said joyfully, as I climbed the golden steps, I *do* understand. It is love; nothing but the unbounded love of God, which fills the whole world."

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The radiant one took me by the hand and led me inside. Oh, the joy of being in that place, where the atmosphere contained naught but pure love! It seemed to me that one little moment there was worth more than all the years of my life. I was no longer abashed before the radiant one, for I recognized in him a teacher divine, whose desire was to help me.

"Come," he said, "let us see what work love does in the world."

We walked to the window and looked out upon the sea, which was the world. Over it flitted shapes dark and gloomy, like demons. It was a dismal sight.

Suddenly, from where we stood, a bright, golden ray shone out over the dreary sea. The dark forms began to flee, and one by one, as they felt the warmth of the golden light, they became meek and gentle, and helpful toward one another. And over the sea was peace, and white-winged messengers flew back and forth across the gently rocking waves.

"I understand," said I, "that love can do anything, and that love does everything."

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"Go and tell it to the world," said he; and he led me to the door and raised his hands in benediction as I descended the steps. I re-entered the boat, and the boatman guided it over the golden way.

A group of pilgrims were standing upon the shore as I landed. They looked at me, and something of the joy within my heart must have been reflected upon my countenance, for they crowded about me.

"What is the good news that you bring?" they asked eagerly.

"Love can do anything, and love does everything," I said. *"Whatever else may seem, there is nothing else in the world but God's love—nothing but God's love."*

OVER THE HILLS AND BEYOND
THE SEA THE SUN IS ALWAYS
SHINING.

From the hill-top where we stood we could look down upon the surrounding country, which was spread out like a panorama before us: wooded hills and verdant valleys, bright with the blooms of midsummer: here and there cattle were grazing peacefully.

From somewhere up on the hill a stream came tumbling. We could not see it from where we stood, nor could we hear it; but we knew what must be, for just below us, at the foot of the hill, we saw the water all foamy and turbulent as it started across the valley. Then slower and slower it glided along, gracefully curving its way, with gradually widening banks. Gradually becoming more and more peaceful, it flowed along with that stillness and majesty which depth alone can give, on and on, through salty marshes now, till it reached the restless sea.

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Far out across the shining waters the horizontal rays of the setting sun marked a golden path to lands unseen.

Now and then we heard the soft, contented lowing of the cattle in the meadow; and from somewhere on the hills beyond, so faintly we could barely distinguish the sound, came the tremulous bleating of a lamb, drowsily, as it nestled closer, its little head half hidden in its mother's breast.

From a point lower down on the hill-side pilgrims came into the valley. Each one carried a burden of some sort. Sometimes it was a tiny thing, no heavier than a basket of flowers; and sometimes the weight of the burden bent the back of him who bore it.

I noticed that some of those whose burdens were the heaviest sang gaily.

"How can it be?" I asked in surprise. My companion replied, "Joy cares not for external things, for it lies deep within the heart."

Each pilgrim, as he looked toward the western sky, hesitated: for they all were

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seeking the golden path across the sea, but, from where they were, they could not see which path was most direct.

Some of them chose the path which lead down into the valley. It was a beautiful path, shaded with densely growing trees, and overhung with vines.

And the pilgrims ate of the poisonous fruit which grew temptingly by the wayside. Then their burdens became very heavy, and their feet dragged from weariness: and they threw themselves down upon the turf ere long, and never found the golden path at all.

Other pilgrims chose the path which led to the meadow where the cattle were feeding. I did not wonder that many went that way—it was such a beautiful path. The midsummer grasses were waving and nodding in the breeze, and the brilliant hued flowers which dotted the meadow made one think of a huge flowered carpet, woven for the habitation of some mammoth princess.

The pilgrims ran along like happy children; and often, as the path wound in and out,

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they caught a glimpse of the sunlight, and they thought they would soon come to the golden way.

But after awhile the path divided into so many smaller paths that the pilgrims became confused, and knew not which way to go. And some of them wandered for a long, long time, trying now this path, now that, only to find that none of them led to the golden way.

Those who returned looked old and careworn, and the garlands which they brought were all withered. They had been so beautiful when they had gathered them: but now, like old ideas, and old prejudices, and old things in general, they were a hindrance: so, one by one, they were thrown away. It was pitiful to see how some of the pilgrims clung to the old withered things. They would, perhaps, throw away everything except one or two faded, dry flowers—but how precious the one or two were!

Finally, with tears and sighs, they laid the last ones tenderly down, and hurried away.

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Then, with steps more elastic, and faces bright with renewed hope, they joined the pilgrims who were traveling toward the sea. It was a toilsome path, and some stumbled on the rough stones, and fell.

Oh! the view that greeted the eyes of those who, having climbed to the top of the last hindering hill, gazed seaward!

I, looking at them, knew not which it was, the sea, or the sky, or the joy within their hearts, that made them look so radiant.

The golden path lay straight before them now; and as each pilgrim stepped into the shining light, he seemed to forget all else but the joy of having found the way.

Like eager children, they hastened to the shore, and stood at the water's edge. As soon as one looked resolutely ahead, the waters parted and made a way like that made for the children of Israel of old. And there were many paths which led safely through the deep waters, and no two of the pilgrims trod the same path; yet they all traveled toward the glory of the setting sun.

Then a strange thing happened. One of

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the pilgrims looked back wistfully toward the shore: for a little faded flower which he had thrown away still lay upon the sand.

Immediately the waters closed about him, and he was borne to the shore upon the crest of a huge wave.

Eagerly he picked up the flower, and hid it in his bosom. Then he walked back and forth seeking a path, but no path was opened for him. For a long time he walked up and down the shore—so long that I turned to my companion and asked, "How long must he wait?"

"Perhaps only a little longer: perhaps for a whole life-time: perhaps through many lives," he replied. "The path will never open for him as long as he cherishes the withered flower. The cloak which hides any unclean thing cannot cover a pure heart; and only the pure in heart can see God."

As we watched, another pilgrim, who was far from shore, looked back.

"See how different it is with him," said my companion. "He is not mourning the loss of some little petty thing, as the other did. He is trying to help others. See the

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loving look upon his face as he points out the path! And see now, how fast he travels onward, as if helping hands were held out to him! How radiant he has become—like a light to guide others on their way!”

“There are ones further along who are still more radiant,” I observed.

“Yes, but even the lesser lights help to make the world brighter,” he replied.

“Who are all these pilgrims upon the shore?” I asked.

“They who seek God.”

“And who are those radiant ones far out across the sea?”

“The pure in heart, who shall find God,” he replied: “And they shed light upon the world because the nearer they approach to God, the more they become like Him.”

THE WATER-LILY.

Deep in the earth, beneath the waters of a peaceful lake, lay the root of a water-lily. In this root was the germ of life.

One day, when the warm rays of the spring sunshine first penetrated the watery depths, the root realized that to live meant something more than to merely exist: that real living meant growth, fruition. Then the desire to live came; and simultaneously with this desire, as if awakened by it, came the impetus of growth, and the lily's true life began.

Slowly at first, and then more rapidly as it gained strength and courage, a long, slender stem pushed upward toward the surface of the lake; and finally, one day, a fair green leaf, the leaf of Hope, floated, now here, now there, yet always safely anchored.

Soon afterward there were two leaves rocking gently upon the bosom of the lake. The second leaf was very much like the first,

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except that it was a little larger, and, the stem being stouter and stronger, the leaf was less easily tossed about by the wind. The name of the second leaf was Faith.

It was wonderful how quickly the third stem grew, and a bud made its way toward the light, till it lay by the side of its two sisters, Hope and Faith.

Slowly and tremblingly at first, as if shaken by emotion, the petals began to unfold in the light of a bright summer morning; the glossy green petals first, then the white, opened wider and wider, until, at last, a tiny miniature of the sun looked up toward the great sun above, and the lily's life was complete.

That day a man, great and learned, according to the world's standard, chanced to be rowing upon the lake. He saw the fair white blossom, and, resting upon his oars, he soliloquised: "Your life is more perfect than mine, O symbol of purity and light! All my learning is as nothing compared to your wisdom; for while I was struggling in the mire of Isms and Ologies, and looking

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vainly to the scanty knowledge of my fellow-men for aid, you, realizing the power within yourself, obeyed the divine impulse, and gave your soul a chance to grow: till now your face reflects the light of Heaven."

THE FIRE-FLIES.

Down in the valley the fire-flies were darting about like torch-bearers at some elfin fete. They flitted among the trees, playing hide and seek among the leaves; they soared high up in the soft summer air till they looked almost like some of the lesser stars which helped to light the sky; they illuminated the tips of the grasses which bent beneath their weight; they lighted up the petals of the daisies till they looked like gold.

A crowd of boys and girls were chasing the fire-flies. Being children of the day, they loved light, and so, though they knew not whence or why the impulse came, they ran hither and thither, trying to catch the pretty things as they flew about.

The ground was rough, and the children often stumbled and fell: only to jump up again, laugh the pain away, and hurry on in merry pursuit, to be caught in the brambles,

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perhaps, and painfully scratched, or stung by a nettle, while trying to grasp the tiny lamp which lighted its prickly leaf.

But what did a few hurts matter! Mer- rily the children chased about, catching the fire-flies, and putting them in bottles, where they glowed fitfully, but gave no steady light by which they could guide their tired feet.

As they stumbled homeward in the dark- ness, one of the children—whose little limbs were sore from many bruises—happened to glance upward. “Look!” he cried. He threw down the bottle of fire-flies he had been carrying so carefully, and ran toward the hill which rose before them.

The children all looked up, and straight- way each one threw away his fire-flies and followed.

At the top of the hill stood an angel clad in white. In her hand was a torch which flamed so brightly and steadily that it lighted the way for the children to travel up the stony path.

Eagerly they crowded about her.

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"Tell us," they cried, "what is it that you hold in your hand?"

"It is the Light of Truth," the angel replied. "See how steadily it burns. The feet of many have traveled upward, guided by its light."

"If we had walked in this light we should not have stumbled," said the children.

"Our little lamps flickered so that we could not see the path; and we fell, and were painfully bruised."

"Thus it is with all who follow error," the angel said. "But people never see the Light of Truth until they look upward."

THE WINGED MESSENGER.

We stood at the water's edge. The sand was hard and moist beneath our feet : before us the waves danced and sparkled in the sunshine.

A misty radiance which my eyes could not penetrate concealed the distant view. As I looked, out from this radiance came a snow-white dove. With wings which barely skimmed the crest of the waves, the spotless bird flew toward me.

What was it that he carried—a huge straw, or a twig, perhaps, to strengthen his nest high up on some rocky ledge?

Nearer and nearer the dove came, till it reached the shore, and laid its burden at my feet. Then it rested, so close I could have taken it in my hand, had I not respected its confidence in me, and its inviolable right, which all creatures have in common, the right to rest after toil.

At closer view, the burden which the bird had brought looked like a round stick,

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smoothed and whitened by the waves. I picked it up. To my surprise, it proved to be a roll of parchment.

I watched the bird as it flew away across the water. Slowly, as if one of many veils were lifted, the mist which lay over the more distant waters became thinner, and I dimly saw a stately building, all dazzling white.

The bird flew directly toward it, and after circling about for a moment, darted in at a window. Then the mist thickened again, and the building was hidden from my sight.

Eagerly I unrolled the scroll, till I saw these words, written in a bold, clear hand:

"God is good. There is no good which is not of God."

I hastened to unroll the scroll further. "Wait!" said he who stood at my side. "Ponder well upon what you have already read." A restraining hand was laid upon mine.

"There is nothing good which is not of God. Health, wealth and happiness; joys and sorrows; bliss and woe; all are of God, and all are steps toward God."

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I unrolled the parchment further, and these words greeted my eyes:

"God is power. There is no power apart from God."

"Wait!" again the restraining hand held mine.

"God is power: manifested in so many different ways. Seed-time and harvest; heat and cold; sunshine and storm; life and death. Let God be removed but for one moment—what chaos!"

Again I turned to the scroll.

"God is peace. There is no peace apart from God."

"Consider," said my companion, "what peace means. A ceasing from strife and turmoil, first. But peace means something more than a merely negative condition: there must be an inward consciousness of oneness with God. That only can bring rest, content, peace.

"All the sin, sickness and sorrow in this world come from straying away from God, in one way or another; and until we return there can be no peace for us."

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Again I unrolled the scroll, and read the last message:

"Peace comes to him who has overcome desire: who has placed his foot upon the head of the dragon: whose eyes look not upon the lust of the flesh: whose ears are deaf to the song of the siren.

"His feet fall not into the snare of the crafty one, for his eyes are fixed upon the hill-top, whence shineth the light of truth."

THE CLIMBERS.

The mountain path up which my white-robed companion and I were toiling was steep and rough, and the sharp stones hurt my feet.

I was tired and discouraged. "Why should we climb this hard path?" I asked rather petulantly.

"Because each one who climbs," said he, "makes the path a little smoother, and a little easier, for those who are to follow."

We toiled on in silence. Soon we reached the top. The stars had never seemed as near before: one in particular, which shone with a clear blue light, seemed less than a span away. Suddenly a great longing came over me—a longing to visit that star.

My companion seemed to read my thoughts.

"They who aspire rightly," he said, "may even reach the stars."

At that moment I loved the star better than anything. I breathed my love and

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aspiration. Lo, a shining golden cord, frail, yet tangible, reached from me to the star.

“Oh, had I the knowledge to use this golden link which binds earth and sky!” said I. Behold, a shining cord, as blue as the star itself, hung parallel with the golden one. Seemingly blown by the mountain breeze, they wound and twisted about me—the golden and the blue.

All suddenly I understood the meaning of it all: that I myself, by my aspiration, had made a way—an aerial ladder, as it were, from earth to sky. Taking the suggestion from the gold and blue, gently twisting about each other, I breathed deeply, and with each breath, found myself farther from the earth, and nearer to the star; which, as I approached, seemed less strange. When I had reached it, it seemed as if I had often been there—yet how could it be, when the earth was my home!

I was surprised to see my former companion by my side.

“Did you come over the shining spiral with me?” I inquired.

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"I cannot travel your path; nor can you travel mine. In this, as in all other things, each must make his own way. And sometimes, while the feet are traveling painfully upward, the soul is gaining strength to mount to realms most high."

Then I recalled the steep mountain path, with its sharp stones; and I thought of life, with its trials and heartaches—both leading upward.

"Look!" said my companion. "See the place where you were!"

The earth had never looked as it did then. And humanity—I had never seen it as it looked when viewed with broader vision—a struggling mass—grovelling, and groping, and stumbling, and falling, and rising—to fall again—all with eyes fixed upon the ground. The sun was shining brightly overhead; but a dark cloud, with only a rift here and there, hung over the earth.

And with their eyes fixed upon the ground, the people could not see the bright light which shone through in places: for

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truth can never be hidden entirely. It will always shine bright and clear somewhere.

"What makes the darkness over the earth?" I asked.

"The gloomy thoughts of the people," he replied.

"It is so pitiful," I said. "Isn't there something we can do?"

"There is always something we can do," he said. "And from this day on you will never forget what that something is. No matter how bad conditions may be, love always works wonders. You have heard that many times before, but never understood what it meant. Now you are to learn."

I had always loved humanity, but had never realized how much till that moment. My brothers and sisters, struggling so hopelessly! Love them! I would have descended from the star, and have lost it forever! Would have toiled, bent my shoulders to the yoke, and my back to the lash! Would have endured tortures unspeakable! anything! if by so doing I could help one mortal to see the light!

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"Look now!" said my companion. "See the wonder that love has wrought already."

I looked. A few, a mere handful among the vast throng, were looking upward toward the light. Gradually these few left their companions, and, one by one, began to travel toward the hill-tops; each choosing a different path. It was interesting to watch them as they ascended, slowly and haltingly at first, but as they more and more, looked upward toward the radiant sky, less and less did they see the stumbling-blocks in the path before them. Finally they did not see them at all; then they ascended rapidly.

One pilgrim had reached a point higher than the others. At a turn in the path a huge, savage-looking beast awaited his coming—crouching, ready to spring upon him. I shuddered, expecting to see him torn to pieces. When, lo! the beast looked at him, then turned and slunk away. The pilgrim had shown no fear; yet he carried no weapon.

I turned to my companion, who answered my question even before I had formulated

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it. "Evil has no terrors for him who is clothed in the armor of truth," said he. "Evil shrinks from the very atmosphere of love and truth, as the beast shrank from yonder pilgrim. Look now!"

The climber had reached the hill-top.

As he stood there, his white robes glistening and gleaming in the sunshine, I was reminded of the light which is set on a hill, and cannot be hid.

Throngs of people from the country around were beginning to climb up the hill-side. At first their eyes were fixed upon the leader, worshipfully; but as he pointed toward the sun, their upturned faces were made radiant in the golden light.

Other pilgrims climbed to other hill-tops. Each had his throng of followers, who came from the lowlands near by, till finally there were no people left in the valleys: all were climbing upward. For that race there was no more sorrow, no more sickness, no more sin; for they had been shown the way leading to Heaven: the one path—toilsome, yet

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made bright with the radiant sunshine of God's love.

Once more I turned to the white-robed Essene. It was he who asked the question this time: his eyes looked very earnestly into mine as he said:

“Isn't it worth while to climb the mountain-path?”

THE AWAKENING.

A soft, dim light filled the place upon which I gazed; and I heard the sound of many voices singing in tones low and sweet—sweeter than we upon earth can sing—“Come, weary one, and rest.” Over and over again they sang it; and a feeling of peace came upon me as I listened.

Presently a woman entered slowly, supporting the form of a man, whose eyes were closed as if in sleep. She placed her burden gently upon the ground. As she stood looking at him, I observed her. She was a fair, fair woman, tall and queenly, with a face which made me think of one of Raphael's Madonnas; but there was a look upon her countenance which the greatest artist upon earth could not portray.

The prostrate man opened his eyes, and sitting up, he gazed about like a child who wakes happily from sleep. He too, heard the matchless chorus which, a moment after-

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ward, died softly away: "Come, weary one, and rest."

Looking up, he addressed the woman.

"Are you the Angel of Death?" he asked.

"Men call me that," she replied. "I am the Angel of New Life—See!" And bending tenderly over him, she gently touched his eyes with her hand. A look of ecstasy came over his face: for he saw the causes of all things. He saw the mistakes of his past life, and knew why he had failed in some things; and he saw how to atone for wrongs he had done; and how to do what was best at all times.

"Not Death, but New Life," he said softly, as if to himself.

THE WAVES.

I stood at the top of a cliff overlooking the sea. At my feet lay the beach, with its long stretch of shining sand upon which the waves rolled ceaselessly.

Directly in front of me a low neck of sand extended out into the sea. Upon this projecting beach stood a woman. Her gown, of some soft green fabric, fell in graceful, clinging folds till it touched the sand.

Silently she stood gazing far out across the deep.

Suddenly her eyes became fixed upon a huge wave. It seemed as if the sun must have fallen upon this one wave with more direct rays than upon the others, for it shone with a peculiar, golden brilliancy.

As the wave came toward the shore, it seemed to be cloven in the center, so that the two parts would strike the shore, each upon a different side of the neck of sand upon which the woman stood.

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As she gazed, Lo, two huge scrolls appeared, one upon each of the golden waves. Upon the wave toward the west these words were written:

"Health, and wealth, and length of days for me."

She turned and read the scroll upon the wave toward the east:

"Health, and wealth, and length of days for others."

The woman knew instinctively that the wave which touched her feet would bring in reality that which the scroll said.

Which wave should she meet?

She did not covet wealth, surely, nor length of days: but so much of her life had been passed in illness; and perfect health for the remainder of her life would mean so much!

The woman hesitated. She looked again at the waves, rolling rapidly toward her.

She walked toward the west, and waited where the sand was wet. "Health for me at last," she said gladly to herself.

On, and on, and on the wave came. The

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look upon the woman's face grew less glad, and a troubled expression came into her eyes.

Just as the two waves reached the shore the woman walked to the other side, and, with a face as white as marble, hastened to meet the wave which bore the words, "*For others*" upon its crest.

The wave came, and dashed all foaming upon her feet. And behold! the other wave, suddenly growing great and powerful, rose high, and rolling tumultuously across the strip of sand, mingled with its mate.

The hem of the woman's gown floated, and was tossed about like a piece of pale green sea-weed upon the eddying waves.

As the waters receded the woman turned to leave the shore, and I saw her face. It looked like the face of one transfigured.

THE WHEAT-FIELD.

Side by side the white-robed Essene and I walked through a field of wheat, marking a path as we went.

When we had reached the further side, we turned and looked back.

The grain, all golden in the sunlight, was gently rocking in the breeze, like a summer sea.

"So like humanity," said he who stood beside me, "tossed about by each passing fancy, and bending beneath the pressure of public opinion."

The way which we had come was clearly defined. "Few there are who walk the path," he said, "but see how those few stand out amongst the common herd. The stalks were all trodden to earth as we passed; but a few, the strong ones, have risen again."

"And mark you," he continued, "they have risen, not with the aid of helping hands,

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but by their own inward strength. So must it be with all who would attain."

"But some are still lying prone upon the ground," I remarked. "What of them?"

"They will never rise again," he replied, "like those mortals who are too weak to endure the crushing and grinding of life's experiences, and break 'neath the weight of them. But the germ of life is still there; and sometime—perhaps next season, perhaps after many seasons—they will live again, in this or in some other form. And sometime they will be able to absorb enough vigor from the earth, and the sun, and the rain, to make them strong, so they can withstand all things that may come."

A bird, flying down, pulled a stalk of wheat up by the root, and flew away with it.

"There are many who seem to fail in their mission on this earth," said my companion.

"Some who seem to have been born to rule great empires merely serve: but in that very serving strengthen that empire; just as

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the stalk of wheat will be woven into the nest, and help to make it stronger.

"There is always some niche to be filled by one who is willing."

Then he added gently, as if to comfort me:

"A life of self-sacrifice always brings one nearer the bright blue sky."

WHEN THE BOAT'S PROW TOUCHED THE SHORE.

An atmosphere of peace and restfulness seemed to fill the upper room.

Through the dense tropical foliage outside a single golden ray from the late afternoon sun fell slant-wise across the floor.

In the fire-place was a fire—a tiny flame, yet so strangely brilliant that it seemed like a symbol of home, rather than a fire kept burning from necessity.

Close by the hearth was a cradle, quaintly fashioned from a single piece of wood. An infant was sleeping peacefully in the cradle. From the door-way where I was standing I could see its face, pale, ethereal, like the face of a child upon whom the hand of the Angel of Death rested.

A sweet faced woman moved about the room. She, too, had that strange pallor; but there was a radiance about her which the child did not have. Human or super-human—which she was I could not tell.

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As I stood watching, and wondering, another woman entered the room and stood by the cradle, looking at the sleeping child. Impulsively, she stooped to take it in her arms, but the Radiant One gently forbade her.

When the woman had gone, she turned to me.

"It is hard to forbid a mother to touch her own child," she said.

"Is not the child yours?" I asked, somewhat surprised.

"Mine only for a little while," she replied. "All through my earthly life—the only life I can remember—I longed for the touch of tiny hands about my neck: for baby lips against mine; but my longing was not satisfied.

"Now that I have come into this life, I have been given the work I love best of all—the care of little children.

"Sometimes," she continued, "the soul of the mother is called away as soon as she has brought her child into the world, and often the child, too weak to stay by itself, follows.

"Sometimes this is best, but not always.

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"A wonderful soul lies here," she said, as she looked toward the cradle, "a soul that will be a power for good in the world; and the world has especial need of such souls just now.

"It is my task to watch over this little one until it is strong enough to go into the world upon its mission."

The child woke, and the Radiant One lifted it from the cradle and held it lovingly in her arms.

"A joy I never knew until I came here," she said.

"But if you love the child so much, will you not grieve when it leaves you?"

"Sometimes I am lonely for a short time," she replied, "but never for very long. A little motherless one always comes; and sometimes I care for several at one time." She pointed to a corner of the room where several cradles stood. "They were all filled a short time ago, but one by one, as they become strong enough, they left me, to go out among mortals: all but one, and that one followed its mother.

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"That is why I could not allow the woman who came today to touch her child. The other mother took her baby in her arms, and it could not resist the mother-love. It went with her, to sleep.

"But the world needs great souls so much just now."

I left the Radiant One caressing the child. Going down stairs, I paused upon the threshold of another room and looked in.

A cheery young woman was watching over a number of little children. One was in a cradle, several were creeping about upon the floor, and two were toddling happily after a kitten, who seemed to enjoy the chase as much as they did.

"Are these also the souls of motherless children?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied, "and I love them all for the sake of my own little one, who was given and taken away all in one brief day."

"And do they become helpers of humanity, like those in the upper room?"

"Yes, but in a different way. The children in the upper room will become teachers

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and leaders of men. These that I am caring for are destined to serve the world differently."

"This child"—she pointed to one of the little toddlers—"will invent many labor-saving machines, and so give men more time for study and recreation.

"And the child in my arms will write music so sweet that men will be better, simply from hearing it.

"Until a short time ago," she continued, there was a beautiful soul here, destined to become a world-famous surgeon, able to cure blindness regardless of what the cause may have been. He grew so strong and rugged that I sent him to play upon the sandy shore."

"Have you been there?" she inquired.

Just then we heard shouting and childish laughter.

"Go look!" said the cherry little lady. So I bade her goodbye.

Leaving the building, I came upon a wide, sandy beach. Such a merry crowd I saw! Many little children romping, and

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digging in the sand, and wading in the tiny waves which rippled upon the shore. With the children, in merry fellowship, were a number of pet animals of various kinds.

Watching over the children were several women, all serving joyously, for they, too, had longed for the touch of loving little hands.

Mingling with the merry throng were a number of men, young, for the most part, who seemed to enjoy the play as much as the children themselves.

I had never realized till then that sometimes father-love longs, and is not satisfied.

I was somewhat surprised to see a white-haired man sitting upon the sand. He looked rather lonely at first; but soon a group of children came running to him. Some of them sat upon the sand at his feet, while others climbed upon his knee.

Curiously, I approached them. He was telling a story.

When he had finished, he said, "Now scamper, every one of you, and play, and

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grow strong, so you will be ready when the Love-boat comes."

As soon as they had gone, the old man turned to me. "All my earthly life," he said, "I longed to teach little children; for I loved them. But I was dumb from birth; and the strange guttural noises I made frightened them, so they would not come near me.

"Now I am very happy; for whenever they are tired with play, they hurry to me for a story."

"Please tell me about the Love-boat," I requested.

"Here it comes now," he said, pointing far out across the water. "You will see for yourself what it is."

Slowly approaching was a small white boat of quaint and graceful design, with a golden star at its prow. The young man who guided the boat was fair-haired and of princely bearing.

"The messenger whom the Elder Brothers send," explained the old man.

"The Elder Brothers—who are they?" I asked.

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"God's chosen helpers. That is all I can tell you of them just now," he said. "You will know more of them sometime. Knowledge is never withheld from those who are ready to receive it."

The boat's prow grazed the sand, and the messenger looked earnestly at the children, all gathered excitedly at the water's edge. Stepping ashore, he approached them, and, taking a little fellow tenderly in his arms, he placed him in the boat.

The old man at my side waved gaily to the child.

"He surely is strong enough to go into the world," he said, "and he is needed there, for he will teach men how to turn barren lands to fertile ones, and so end famine for all time."

I expected to see weeping when the boat left the shore; but to my surprise every one seemed happy. The children and their guardians waved farewell to the tiny voyager, who seemed quite elated at having been chosen.

As if the star at the boat's prow had shed

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its light along the way, the water in its trail shone like molten gold.

After gazing silently for a few moments at the shining path, gradually narrowing in the distance, my venerable companion turned to me.

"We call it the Love-boat," he said, "because everyone who voyages in it to the land of mortals does so through love for humanity, and a desire to serve.

"And the star at the prow is the ideal—the guiding light which he follows through life."

THE GOLDEN LIGHT.

As we landed at the head of the bay, we heard no sound save that of the summer waves, licking the sand at our feet.

Far back from the beach, commanding a view of the bay and of the sea beyond, stood a building, creamy-white in color, and unique in architecture.

Its low sloping roof, clearly outlined against the dense tropical foliage, reminded me of a Japanese temple; yet the purity of design, and the absence of distracting ornamentation, gave it an appearance of chasteness in comparison—like a musical classic, heard after a popular ditty.

As we approached the building, I noticed that the same gentle curve had been used in outlining the sandy walk and the broad front steps.

In the middle of these steps, extending about half way down, was a partition.

“We must part here,” said my guide,

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"but we shall meet again. I can teach you many things, but that which you are to learn here can be taught by no one. You must perceive the truth for yourself. Once realized inwardly, truth needs no explanation."

As my guide climbed the steps at the left, I turned to the right. The partition continued through the center of the hall which I entered.

At the top, in about the middle of the hall, was a huge globe, filled with pure, sparkling water. Never before had I seen water which shone and radiated as this did, filling the whole hall with pure white light.

At my right was a closed door, before which, as if to guard it, stood a young man wearing a white robe and turban. I asked if I might enter.

"You are not yet ready," said the guardian kindly.

As I stood waiting, a feeling of reverence came over me, and involuntarily I bowed my head.

The white-robed guardian opened the

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door silently, and raised his hand in blessing as I entered the room.

I felt, rather than saw, the darkness which filled the place. As I stood there I realized, as I never had before, that the soul must be able to stand alone 'midst the gloom of the darkest night, ere it can know itself, and God.

I lifted my eyes—above and before me was a star, shedding golden light through the gloom. Thus a ray of truth appears to a soul which stands alone in the darkness.

In a moment I saw, on the further side of the room, in base-relief, as it were, the likeness of the Christ-child and His Mother. Above and around them was a radiance, not of earth, lighting up the faces of the Wise Men, who stood worshipfully gazing at the child. The whole group seemed unlike a picture, or a carving—so alive—so pulsing, it looked.

Just then I noticed a light overhead. I looked up. Hosts of angels were above me. In their midst was Buddha, from whom

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radiated the same pure light as from the Holy Infant.

Then I understood, as I never had before, that it is not the personality of the Christ, but the Christ-spirit, which is a light unto the world: that this light radiates from all the Holy Ones, in greater or less degree, lighting the dark places, showing the path, constituting the hope of struggling humanity today, when the personalities of the World Savors are well-nigh forgotten.

As I left the room, the guardian of the threshold led me to an opening in the partition which divided the hall. This opening was directly under the globe of chrystal water. "Wait," said he.

As I paused beneath the globe, I felt a drop of water upon my head.

"One drop," said he, "brings illumination. From this time on it is given you to understand all things."

In silence we passed to the other side of the hall, where, before another closed door, my guide waited for me.

He opened the door, and I entered.

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When my eyes had become accustomed to the dim light, a strange scene was enacted before me. At my right, spread out, panorama-like, was a steep incline, up which wound a path, at some points rugged and difficult to ascend, at other points filled with pit-falls: again in places, the rocks were worn smooth from the treading of many feet.

At the foot of this incline swarmed a vast horde of human beings—an infant race—till one among them found the beginning of the path.

At first their ascent was not pleasant to look upon, for, as they struggled upward, they fought like brutes, each one trying to gain the easiest way for himself. And many of the weaker ones were trampled upon, or pushed over the side of the steep cliff; while the strong ones hurried on, threatening viciously any who happened to be in their way.

Then, from overhead, obliquely, like rays from the sun shining through mist, came the Christ-light, and fell upon some of the toilers.

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Immediately a great change came over them; they became gentle and kind, and tried to help those who were near them. It was a beautiful sight to see some of them take the burdens from the shoulders of those who were weak and disabled.

The light fell upon some soon after they started upon the path; and at different points along the way it fell upon some; but no one reached the top until the Light had fallen upon him.

My attention was directed to a scene at my left.

In a place apart sat a group of men. Some of them were studiously poring over books: the others were writing. In the cheerless blue light which enveloped them their faces looked pale and wan, yet all of the faces looked earnest.

As I stood gazing at them, a ray of the Christ-light fell upon one who was reading—an old man with snowy hair which fell upon his shoulders. Closing his book, he stood up, looking toward the light. The haggard look left his face, the hard lines

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disappeared, the tired eyes sparkled with hope, and he looked years younger.

Calling his fellow-students, he bade them stand in the Light also: I marveled at the change which came over them.

The ray of Light widened, till, mingling with the blue, it filled the whole place, till there was no gloom, nor any shadows at all.

With the white rays were rays of purest gold.

One by one those who wrote were bathed in the cheering light. Then the words which they wrote shone as if their pens had been dipped in molten gold.

And it was granted me to look down through the ages yet to come, where, in never ending procession, the feet of unborn thousands tread the thorny earthly path, and see them, with outstretched hands and wistful eyes, reach upward to the illumined volumes which shone like stars of purest gold.



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